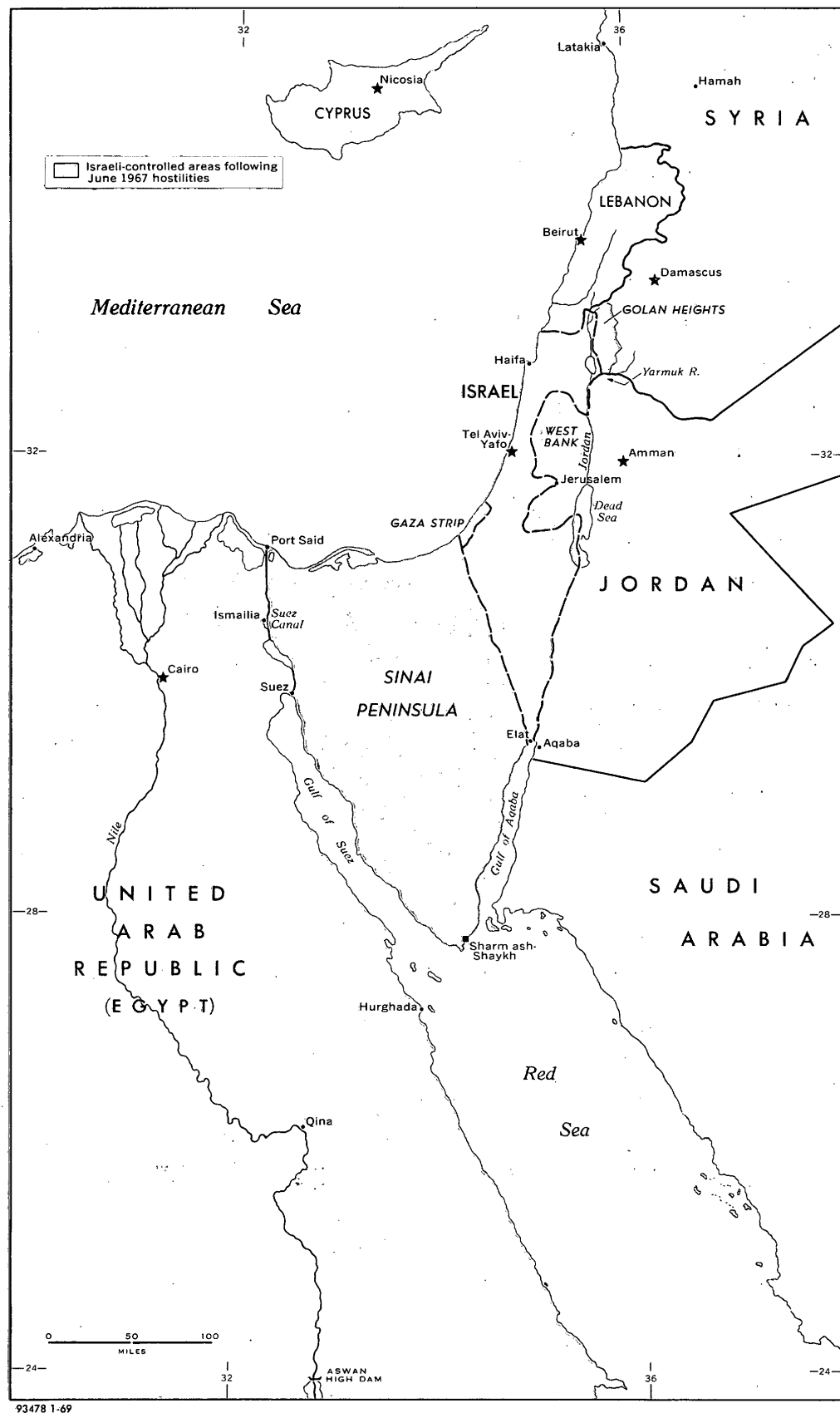


## *The President's Daily Brief*

24 February 1969  
(Morning)

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*FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY*

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

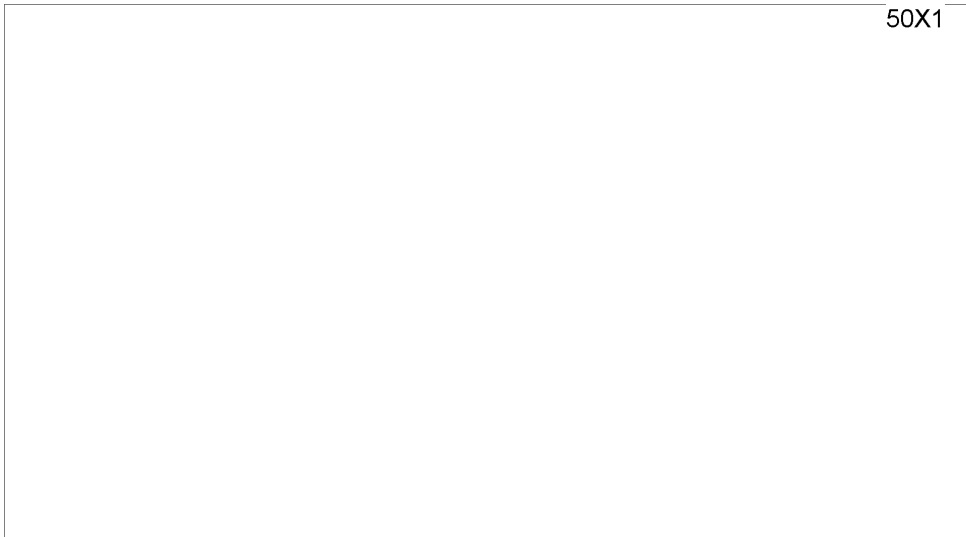
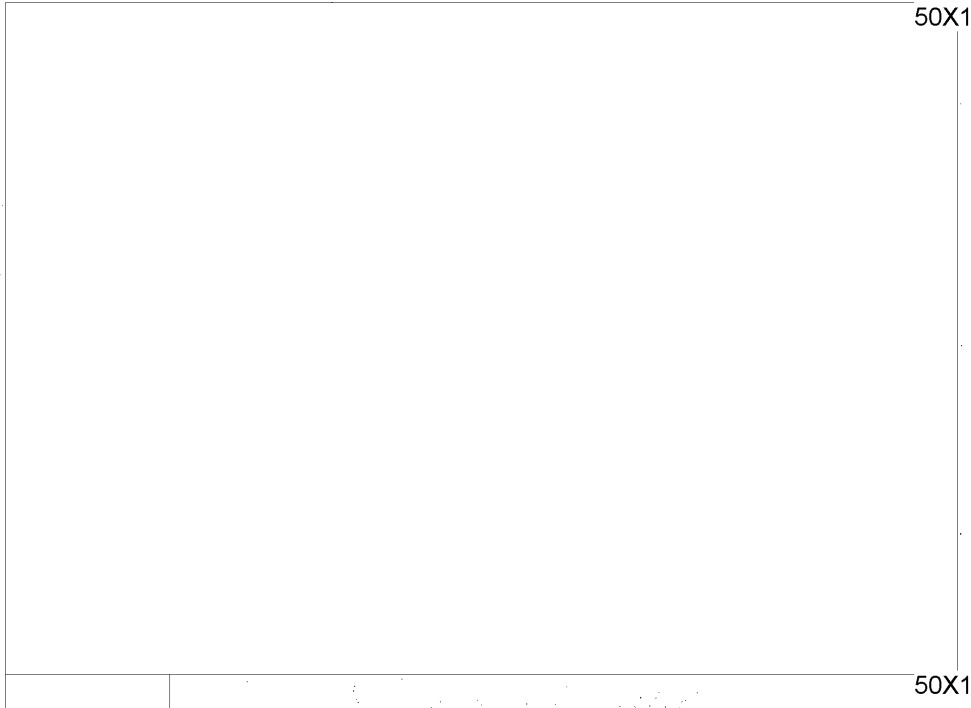
Israel today carried out limited military operations within Jordanian territory south of the Dead Sea. Farther north, there apparently also was extensive Israeli air activity over Jordan. Israel claims its forces in the south were in hot pursuit of a band of Arab guerrillas when the ground action occurred. Further border clashes can be expected.

EUROPE

Neither the source nor implication of the dispute between Paris and London over the De Gaulle - Soames conversation of 4 February is yet entirely clear, but it has had a major impact on the prospects for greater European cohesion. From the earlier account of the meeting provided by the US Embassy in London by the British, De Gaulle took his usual line with Soames, saying that time was not yet ripe for Britain to enter the Common Market, that British entry would completely change the character of the Market, and that in the long run, the Market would in any case evolve into a simple trading area. When asked by Soames what the British should then do, De Gaulle was reported to have said that Britain should become more independent of the Americans, after which the Europeans could get<sup>50X1</sup> together to deal with the "two hegemonies."

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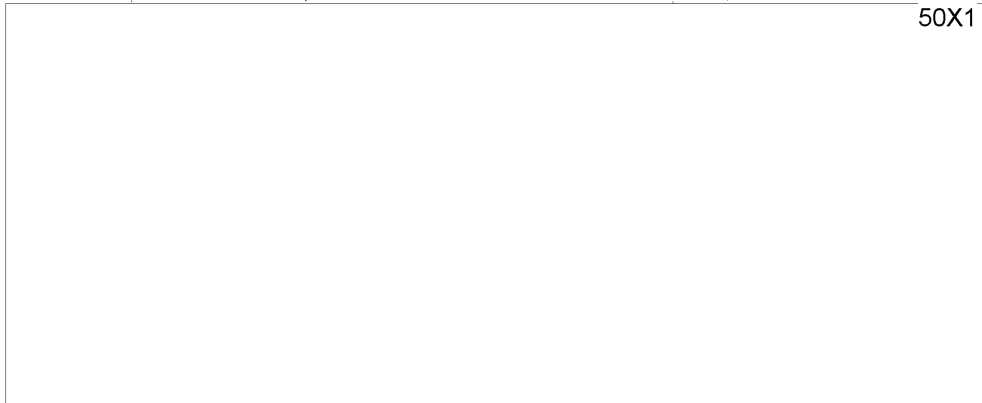


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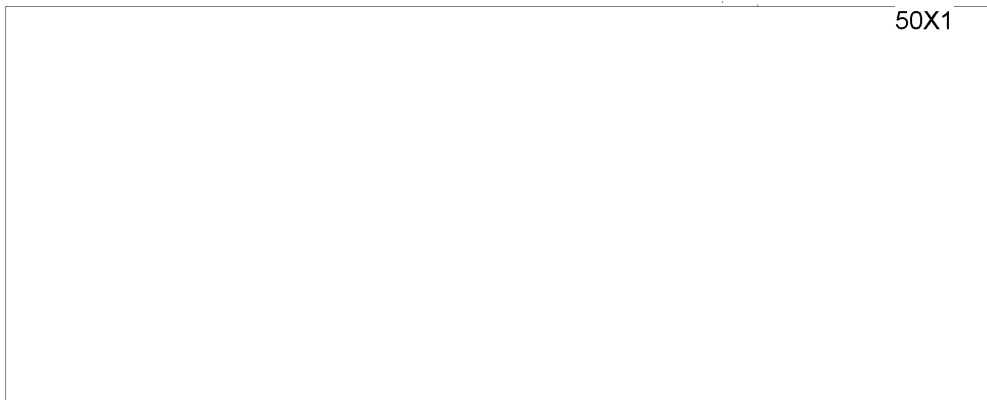
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*SOVIET AFFAIRS*

There have been some clear signs over the weekend that the Communists may be trying to defuse the possibility of a crisis over the holding of the West German presidential election in West Berlin on 5 March. Soviet Ambassador Tsarapkin met with Chancellor Kiesinger on both Saturday and Sunday. On Friday East German Party boss Walter Ulbricht sent a letter to the West German Social Democratic Party proposing that the East Germans issue passes for West Berliners to visit relatives on the other side of the wall at Eastertime in return for a change of venue for the election and on Saturday the chief of the West Berlin Communist Party said he was "convinced" the East Germans would react positively if the election were shifted to a West German city.

Meanwhile the two Soviet divisions which moved out of their garrisons last week returned to their home stations Saturday. Apparently the purpose of their move was a routine training exercise and there are no firm indications of major troop moves which could be connected with the joint Soviet/East German exercises around Berlin announced for early March.

Moscow would certainly encourage any diplomatic moves which would enable Bonn to change its mind about holding the

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election in Berlin and Tsarapkin reportedly backed Ulbricht's initiative in his second talk with Kiesinger. For its part, the West German Government, faced with an election campaign next September, can ill afford to appear to be yielding to Communist pressure. In Bonn's view a compromise at this stage must provide for substantial benefits for West Berlin probably including passes for all major holidays and no implementation of the prohibition on travel of West German officials to Berlin.

To sweeten their part of the deal, the East Germans may be willing to negotiate with the West Berlin Senat about more permanent pass arrangements. The Senat met Sunday to consider a reply to Ulbricht's letter and exploratory talks reportedly will be held between the two parties in the next few days.

In any event, the Chancellor almost certainly will bring this question up when he meets the President on Wednesday.

*VIETNAM*

While attacks early this morning (Saigon time) included several new shellings of allied military installations and South Vietnamese towns, there was nothing approaching Sunday's widespread action.

Immediate enemy intentions are not clear at this point, but we believe the Communists will be trying to mount some strong follow-on action. The current effort is largely an attempt to reverse the appearance, if not the fact, of allied progress in South Vietnam in recent months. The Communists probably realize that a one-shot countrywide effort is unlikely

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to have the kind of lasting impact on South Vietnam and on the United States which they are hoping to achieve. Most indications suggest that Communist forces will be trying to sustain a period of offensive action in the next few weeks.

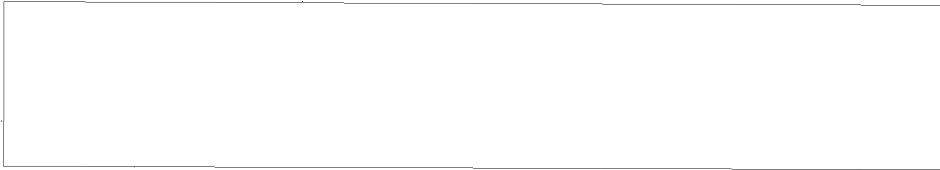
In this connection, we note that the bulk of the 60,000 or so North Vietnamese infiltrators detected moving south in the past three months seem to be headed for the III Corps provinces around Saigon. This strongly suggests that the Communists anticipate taking high casualties in that area, presumably because of current offensive plans.

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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

LAOS

The Communists are still threatening government positions in widely separated areas of the country, but so far there are few signs that a major push is in the works. Although they have not chanced any ground assaults in recent weeks, North Vietnamese are still dug in around the government base at Thateng in the south. Government efforts to relieve the pressure against the garrison have met with some early success, although the tactical situation there is basically unchanged. The government defenders, whose numbers have been substantially reduced through casualties and withdrawals, are getting increasingly restive over their plight.

The Communists are still maintaining pressure against other government positions in the Bolovens Plateau area, including the provincial capitals of Attapeu and Saravane. Recent enemy troop movements suggest that the base at Paksong, some 15 miles southwest of Thateng, may be the Communists' next major target in this area.

Except for the exchange of a few minor government guerrilla bases, the military situation in northern Laos continues to be quiet.

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PAKISTAN

The enthusiasm generated by President Ayub's decision to step down after presiding over constitutional reforms and new elections is tempered by the opposition's realization that it must now share responsibility with Ayub. Opposition leaders such as former foreign minister Bhutto and former air force commander Asghar Khan have issued statements designed to improve their position especially in East Pakistan. The popular East Pakistani leader Mujibar Rahman has been unconditionally freed from his conspiracy charges and is expected to arrive in West Pakistan shortly to meet with other opposition leaders.

Dacca has been celebrating Ayub's promised departure and the release of Rahman but violence from separatist elements erupted again over the weekend there and in smaller cities in East Pakistan. Now that Ayub as the symbol of West Pakistani authority has been beaten, it is likely that increasing clashes between moderates and radicals in East Pakistan will occur.

PERU

The rally held annually to celebrate opposition party leader Haya de la Torre's birthday went off without incident although the crowd was somewhat smaller than expected. Haya's speech was moderate and obviously designed to avoid provoking the government.

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